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Poor Tom
A number of people I know have lost their jobs, but Tom has come up with a new idea - not earning money out of choice. After much deliberation, and middle-of-the-night soul-searching, he has finally decided, that yes, he really does have it in him to not earn any money. “Bad for the family,” is how he puts it, shaking his head, gravely. This might seem like quite a sensible course of action if say, you are Lord Fred or the Duke of Westminster. After all, being rich is almost worse now than being a paedophile. But Tom is determined to test a new principle; do you need money at all?
As somebody with a terror of being impoverished in old age, I have found his new course of action (in truth, a pretty old course of action) the equivalent of being trapped on a beach alone at high-tide. The Great Decision was prompted, of course, by him actually being offered a job as a truffler - a feat so wondrous I instantly called both mothers-in-law to celebrate. But no. “The Gods tell me not to accept any money. I wouldn’t love you any more if I did,” he says, helping himself to another of my Mother‘s Day chocolates. Instead, he proposes to be paid for writing poems about what it is like to be an unpaid truffler; a career as lucrative, one imagines, as writing about unpaid goldfish-keepers or snail farmers. Up till now I have always thought I was living with someone who is slightly bonkers. Never did I realise that he wanted to be Ghandi.